

Soviet Propaganda Alert

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SUMMARY

(Further details of the items on this sheet
can be found on the referenced pages)

Major Soviet propaganda themes related to the U.S. in
November and December stressed:

Arms Control. Soviet media continued to denounce the U.S. position at START, INF, and MBFR as seeking unilateral advantage and demanding unilateral disarmament on the part of the Soviet Union. The U.S. was accused of using the talks as a cover for the development and deployment of new weapons systems. Soviet policy was portrayed as defensive, moderate, and fair. See p. 1

The Gas Pipeline. Soviet media took full propaganda advantage of the lifting of the gas pipeline sanctions, declaring the act to be a victory for the independence of Europe and purporting to see a widening of the split between the U.S. and its European allies. See p. 9

Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Soviet commentators denounced the U.S. for allegedly obstructing the Madrid talks. See p. 9

The United States. The U.S. mid-term elections were seen by Soviet propagandists as a defeat for the Administration and a protest against President Reagan's policies. The poor state of the U.S. economy was attributed directly to U.S. military spending. See p. 9

Geographic Themes. Soviet media continued to charge that the U.S. and its allies were attempting to incite tension in all parts of the world in order to carry out their imperialist and neocolonialist plans. Trips by U.S. Administration officials were described as attempts to put pressure on various countries to bow to U.S. diktat. See p. 10

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ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

In November and December, the Soviet media continued their obsession with military issues. The media pushed standard themes dealing with alleged U.S. preparations for war, deployment of new weapons systems, and U.S. and Western obstinance and obstructive behavior at the START, INF, and MBFR talks. In all contexts, the Soviets stressed that it was the West, primarily the U.S., that was the source of international tension and the arms race. A Moscow television broadcast in late October put the argument in especially stark terms:

The U.S. course is aimed at deepening tension. Adventurism, crudeness, open egoism--even in relations with its partners--have become characteristic features of the U.S. Administration's policy. The Reagan government has set a course aimed at sharply stepping up arms, including nuclear arms, in the hope of achieving military supremacy over the Soviet Union.

By contrast, Soviet policies and actions were portrayed as defensive, moderate, and directed only at achieving disarmament and peaceful coexistence. According to Soviet commentators, the Soviet Union is interested solely in equality and equal security; it does not seek superiority. Citing arms control and disarmament proposals made at the 26th Party Congress, Brezhnev's late October speech to Soviet military commanders, the pledge to abstain from first use of nuclear weapons, and proposals for a UN convention on test bans, Soviet commentators claimed that the Soviet Union is the bulwark of peace and the main obstacle to imperialist attempts "to push the world into the flames of nuclear war," and that Soviet policy is the only hope of "saving mankind from the sword of Damocles of the nuclear threat."

The contrast between the aggressive policy of the Western imperialists and the policy of the peaceloving Soviet Union has allegedly not gone unnoticed by the world. According to a mid-November Moscow television commentary:

The majority of political observers analyzing the events of the past few days in our country are reaching the conclusion that continuity and continuation in the USSR's peaceloving foreign policy course, based on the Leninist principles of peaceful coexistence, can be considered guaranteed. The materials, commentaries, and articles now being published in the Western press on this theme could be summed up and generalized in the sentence: Moscow is proceeding as before along the path of peace and

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detente. This feeling of optimism and calm confidence in the rightness of our cause is creating good hope in the hearts of our friends all over the world....

Continuity of Soviet Policy After Brezhnev Stressed

The above quotation also illustrates efforts to suggest that Soviet foreign policy has not and will not change after Brezhnev. The Soviet media appeared reluctant even to discuss the issue. With the exception of quoting Andropov instead of Brezhnev, formulations on most foreign policy issues--above all, on disarmament and arms control--remained identical to those of the Brezhnev period.

Just in case anyone missed the idea that Soviet policy remains unchanged under Andropov, a late November Sovetskaia Rossiia article asserted that it had not and would not change:

In recent days our friends and likeminded people abroad and millions of people of good will awaited Moscow's confirmation of the unchanging loyalty of Lenin's motherland to the lofty ideals and constructive actions and initiatives which have always characterized its international activity. And they received such confirmation.

The article went on to quote an Andropov statement to the CPSU Central Committee plenum as evidence.

Arms Control Talks

Two related themes dominated Soviet commentary on the START, INF, and MBFR talks. The first is that the U.S. seeks superiority in both nuclear and conventional arms. The second is that the U.S. and its NATO allies are solely responsible for lack of progress in the talks. An example of this theme was found in Literaturnaia gazeta in late November, which quoted Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko:

What mainly hampers the talks on nuclear armaments, both medium-range and strategic armaments, is not the complexity of the solution of these problems--they were overcome by both sides before--but the lack of the United States' wish to reach agreement on the basis of equality and equal security.

Soviet officials complained bitterly of alleged American and allied intransigence. For example, General Nikolai Chervov, in an early November interview with the Slovak

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party paper Pravda, charged that "The American delegation has not retreated a single step from its original position [at the INF talks], and in reality it is rejecting the attempts to search for a mutually acceptable solution." "The U.S.," said General Chervov, "is interested neither in progress in the disarmament negotiations on nuclear weapons in Europe, nor in progress in the negotiations on limiting strategic arms."

U.S. Forced To Negotiate

Why is the U.S. at the talks at all if it does not truly seek arms limitation? The Soviets give three explanations, none of which are new:

- o The U.S. was forced to the negotiating table by the pressure of West European and American public opinion.
- o The U.S. seeks to defuse the peace movement by pretending that it is serious about negotiations.
- o The U.S. wants to use the talks as cover for deployment of new weapons systems, in particular, INF.

U.S. Tactics "Exposed":

Soviet commentators also asserted that they have seen through U.S. tactics at the talks.

- o The U.S. lies about the alleged Soviet threat. According to a November 1 TASS English analysis: "Despite the unceasing screaming of imperialist propaganda about a 'Soviet military threat', it is clear now to every unprejudiced person where the real threat to peace is flowing from."
- o The U.S. lies about alleged Soviet superiority in nuclear and conventional weapons. Quoting President Reagan's November 22 speech in which the President said the Soviets were ahead by any standard, TASS's Russian service branded the statement "false from beginning to end" and asserted that "even according to official American data, the U.S. had superiority over the USSR."
- o The U.S. lies when its representatives assert that the Soviet Union seeks a qualitative edge on the West. Izvestia, on November 3, attacked U.S. Secretary of Defense Weinberger's statement that the U.S. had shown restraint during the 1970's by acidly asking "how did MIRV's appear in the U.S. arsenal in precisely that period? What was the 'miracle' that spawned the development of cruise missiles, Pershing-2's, neutron weapons, Trident submarines, and many others?"

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- o The U.S. "cooks its data" in order to justify its claim that the Soviet Union has a qualitative edge. TASS military analyst Vladimir Bogachev, in a November 17 dispatch, charged that "when Washington and its allies talk about 'balance', they mean a U.S. superiority," and went on to cite statistics which allegedly prove that the U.S. enjoys superiority in most nuclear fields.
- o The U.S. puts forward proposals that it knows are unacceptable in a deliberate attempt to frustrate the talks.

The Soviets have taken steps to expose the "duplicity" of the United States. Apart from the daily, almost hourly, drumbeat of criticism of alleged and real U.S. policy, the Soviets occasionally produce print and film documentaries on arms control topics. For example, TASS English on November 17 announced the premiere of a film entitled "When The Mist of Lies Clears" which "traces the main aspects of the aggressive policy of the present U.S. Administration, the policy of spiraling the arms race." And Novoe vremia, the multilanguage, widely-circulated international affairs weekly, put out a special supplement in early November entitled "The Threat of Nuclear War: How To Remove It" which polemicizes with alleged Western proponents of limited nuclear war.

Soviet Policy Extolled

Having revealed the true nature of Western intentions on arms control, Soviet publicists inevitably presented their side as reasonable, fair, and in the interests of all mankind. Nikolai Prozhogin, writing in Pravda at the end of November, portrayed the Soviet attitude thus:

From the first days of its existence, the Soviet state expressed readiness for open, honest cooperation with all countries that responded to it with reciprocity. Nowadays too, it is opposed to turning the dispute of ideas into confrontation.... The ideal of socialism is a world without weapons.

We are in favor of equality of rights, of taking both sides' interests into account, and of honest agreement, and we believe in the possibility of reaching it for we know that mankind cannot endlessly tolerate either the arms race or wars, especially as in the present conditions they jeopardize its very existence.

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START and INF

Soviet commentators seldom distinguished between the START and INF talks directly. Instead, they attempted to blur the distinction between strategic and intermediate range nuclear weapons, claiming that the short flight time to Soviet territory rendered the Pershings and cruise missiles strategic weapons that could be used for a first strike.

The Soviets pushed the basic line that the U.S. and the Soviet Union presently enjoy a rough parity in nuclear weapons. While the USSR may have a slight edge in land-based launchers, the U.S. has more strategic nuclear warheads and has double or triple the number of nuclear-capable bombers. Any major modification of existing systems or deployment of new systems would upset this balance and threaten peace because it would encourage the "imperialist" West to seek to blackmail the Soviet Union and its allies--or even launch a war. The planned INF deployment in late 1983 is precisely such a destabilizing act, according to the Soviets.

The West's "zero option" proposal (called "fake" and "odious" or worse in commentaries) was also portrayed as being destabilizing. A TASS English item of December 15 described the U.S. zero option as "envisaging no more and no less but dismantling all Soviet medium-range missiles in exchange for the U.S. renunciation of its plans to deploy INF." This, according to the Soviets, constitutes unilateral disarmament and is unacceptable. Soviet proposals to withdraw all nuclear weapons from Europe are touted as being a "true zero option."

In discussing the West's INF deployment, Soviet commentators hinted that the consequences for Western Europe will be severe. The Soviets claimed that they cannot allow the West to gain superiority, and threatened to take counter-measures which may turn Western Europe into a nuclear battle ground. Soviet media declared that the Pershings and cruise missiles may force them to change their response doctrine to "launch on warning" because the "Euromissiles" can strike Soviet territory in only minutes (Radio Moscow English service, November 30). They warned of the danger of accidental launch, citing the "numerous" false alarms from faulty Western radar and control equipment. Finally, they cautioned Western Europeans about the dangers of accidents, and reported in detail on mishaps involving American nuclear weapons, always asking "what if...."

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MBFR

The West's positions on MBFR were described in a similar vein. The Soviets assert that the West is not interested in genuine reductions, that it in fact wants superiority. The latest draft treaty submitted by the Western side is described as "seeking to undermine the existing equilibrium of forces in Central Europe" by a November 12 Pravda article which suggests that the West is trying to get the question of reducing arms removed from the agenda altogether. Failing a fundamental change in the Western stand, no agreement will be possible.

The Freeze Movement

As usual, Soviet propaganda portrayed the freeze movement in Europe and the U.S. as solidly opposed to the policies of the Reagan Administration. While not going so far as to claim that the freeze movement (and the broader peace movement) actively supported Soviet positions, Soviet publicists were quite willing to point out the remarkable congruence between the slogans of the freeze movement and the positions taken by the Soviet Union (Iuri Zhukov, writing in Pravda, November 30).

Soviet freeze and disarmament proposals were said to evoke widespread interest and even support among "democratic publics" and "responsible politicians" in the West, thereby suggesting a split between the "ruling circles" and the people. Soviet commentators frequently pointed to anti-nuclear demonstrations in countries such as the Netherlands, Italy, Britain, and West Germany--precisely the countries where INF is to be deployed--as a sign of widespread disagreement with government policies. In the USSR, millions-strong rallies, petitions, and the working of "peace shifts" where workers turned over the money earned to the Soviet peace movement were touted as evidence of the desire of the Soviet people for peace (TASS English Service, November 4).

President Reagan's suggestion that the freeze movement was influenced by outside sources provoked a storm of ridicule from Soviet commentators. Calling the suggestion an attempt to discredit the freeze movement, Soviet propagandists pointed to the statement as a sign that the U.S. Administration was worried about the impact of the movement. Radio Moscow's World English Service on November 17 described the President's suggestion as "Red-baiting" and "McCarthyism," and an insult to "senators, archbishops, trade union leaders, Nobel prize winners, and millions of ordinary Americans."

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Soviet commentators claimed that the results of the recent mid-term elections in the U.S., especially the pro-freeze referenda that were passed in several states, provided firm evidence that the freeze movement was strong and growing stronger. Describing the elections in such terms as a "particular mark in the mighty antiwar campaign," a Moscow television report on November 8 called President Reagan's and Secretary Weinberger's alleged attempts to defuse the freeze movement by playing on American patriotism as "chicanery, a complete departure from the rules of fair play to which lip-service is paid in America."

Soviet media also devoted attention to the freeze appeal by U.S. bishops, mainly by describing the alleged efforts of the Administration to undermine it. NSC Director Clark's letter to the bishops was described in a November 18 Radio Moscow English World Service commentary as arguing for the morality of nuclear arms--the same justification that the Truman Administration used when it ordered the nuclear attack on Japan in 1945: "With the gospel on their lips and world domination on their minds, the American leadership did not hesitate to kill thousands of Japanese civilians in the name of American values."

MX Deployment

President Reagan's announcement in late November that 100 MX missiles would be deployed also raised a storm of protest in the Soviet media. Arguing that the decision violated the provisions of both SALT I and II, a Moscow television broadcast of December 5 asserted that the deployment would add nothing to U.S. security--and in fact would weaken it, presumably because of Soviet countermeasures.

TASS's English service on November 23 attacked the decision on every conceivable ground. TASS claimed that the President had deliberately falsified data on the balance of nuclear forces between the U.S. and the USSR, that MX constituted a "qualitative and quantitative perfection" of American missiles, and that it was aimed at upsetting the rough parity between the two countries. Other stories called the deployment decision proof that the U.S. was seeking a first-strike capability.

Soviet commentators claimed that criticism of the MX decision came from all quarters of U.S. society. The TASS item cited in the previous paragraph quoted Senator Edward Kennedy, former Congressman Robert Drinan, and retired Admiral Eugene Carroll as prominent protesters.

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Other Military-Related Issues

Military Doctrine

Soviet propaganda relentlessly stressed the theme that the U.S. was preparing for a "limited nuclear war," undoubtedly in Europe. Commentators claimed that NATO Commander General William Rogers had threatened to use nuclear weapons, and would not shrink from first-use (Krasnaia zvezda, December 1).

War In Space

Several items repeated the Soviet charge that the U.S. was planning to turn space into a "zone of conflict." The media charged that the space shuttle was developed primarily for military purposes. A TASS English service item of November 11 claimed that in June 1982, President Reagan had ordered that "all scientific-technological plans for the exploration of outer space be placed at the Pentagon's service for a decade to come."

Chemical and Biological Warfare (CBW)

Soviet propagandists continued their strong counterattacks against U.S. charges that CBW weapons are being used by Soviet forces and allies in Afghanistan, Laos, and Kampuchea. Claiming that the U.S. had absolutely no proof, the media cited long lists of claims that the U.S. had used CBW weapons for the past twenty years and was developing and adding to its stockpiles now. Krasnaia zvezda of November 18 charged that the U.S. was one of "General Ishii's heirs," referring to the commandant of the World War II Japanese biological warfare experiments.

UN Test Ban Proposal

The Soviets extolled the virtues of their UN proposal for a ban on nuclear tests, saying that it would stop development of new warheads, make it difficult for new nuclear states to emerge, and even reduce pollution (Pravda, November 12). The U.S. and its allies opposed the ban because it would be a "serious obstacle to further perfection and development of new types and systems of U.S. weapons" (TASS English service, December 3).

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Rapid Deployment Force

The Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) came under constant fire for its alleged "interventionist role," mainly in the Persian Gulf. If Soviet commentaries are to be believed, the RDF is setting up commands and stockpiles all over the world. A November 24 TASS English item claimed that units of the West German Army will participate in the RDF, perhaps in the capacity of replacements for U.S. troops in Europe should the troops be sent to the Persian Gulf.

THE GAS PIPELINE

Soviet media played the lifting of sanctions to the fullest, claiming that it represented a clear victory for European independence. Izvestiia of November 29 said that calling the sanctions "hypocritical, shortsighted, egotistical, and stupid ... by no means fill the collection of epithets used to describe U.S. policy." The White House went too far, according to Izvestiia, and West Europe was up in arms. Izvestiia concluded by predicting that:

As long as U.S. policy teeters between thoughtlessness and irresponsibility and until the Americans are cured of their megalomania, the cracks and contradictions [between Europe and the U.S.] will only widen.

Soviet propagandists were unrelenting in asserting that the Europeans had made no agreement on future restrictions on trade with the USSR in order to end the sanctions. They frequently cited French officials in this regard, saying that the U.S. was denied even this "fig leaf."

CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

Commentary on the resumption of the Madrid CSCE meeting on November 9 picked up where it left off when the meeting was last adjourned. The NATO states, especially the U.S., were charged with attempting to derail the meeting and prevent either the adoption of a "substantive and balanced conference document" or agreement on a separate conference on disarmament in Europe (CDE) (Sovetskaia Rossiia, November 11).

THE UNITED STATES

Soviet propagandists kept up their attacks on the Reagan Administration and its policies, devoting special attention to the mid-term elections in November. The elections were said to represent a protest

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... from eleven million unemployed and disagreement with Reagan's social policies from 32 million who are constantly faced with hunger, poverty, and sharp cuts in benefits leaving them destitute (Moscow television, November 4).

The elections constituted a "no confidence vote in Reaganomics," according to TASS's English service (November 3). They were also

... fresh evidence that broad masses of the American people do not share dangerous conceptions of the unlimited arms race pursued by the Reagan Administration (Radio Moscow English service to North America, November 5).

While purporting to recognize the vast significance of the elections as a judgment on the Reagan Administration, Soviet commentators at the same time denied that the elections were valid expressions of democracy. TASS's English service on November 4 questioned what kind of validity an election could have when only 39 percent of the voters participated, and inferred from this that nonvoters "are disappointed with the U.S. political system and are aware that by participating they can change nothing of essence." According to TASS, this is because U.S. politicians

... [ignore] the will of the voters, go back on election promises, and "backstage" deals between political groupings behind which are the most influential circles of monopoly capital....

The poor economic situation in the United States was attributed directly to "Reaganomics and the insane arms race" (TASS English service, November 12). According to TASS, "colossal military expenditures" were sapping the economy and were responsible for unemployment.

GEOGRAPHIC THEMES

Trouble Spots

Soviet propaganda continued its charges that the U.S. and its allies were attempting to foment tension in all parts of the world in order to carry out their imperialist and neocolonialist plans. U.S. policy was portrayed as failing on all fronts, especially in the Third World.

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Lebanon

Soviet propaganda pounded away at the theme of U.S. responsibility for Israel's actions in Lebanon from the original invasion to the massacres in the Sabra and Shatila camps. An early November TASS English item on Lebanon pointed out that the U.S. could not avoid its share of the blame:

The Yankees do not kill, but they stepped into Lebanon over heaps of corpses. Israel's aggression is conducted with American weapons, with American money and under American political, and now military cover-up.

Soviet Arabic broadcasts over Radio Moscow and Radio Peace and Progress totally rejected U.S. efforts to settle the crisis, pushed Soviet proposals, and openly suggested that no real Arab could possibly accept the U.S. plan. A Radio Moscow Arabic broadcast on November 4 was typical:

The U.S. is trying through its military charity to Lebanon to make Arab public opinion forget the reality of its participation in the Israeli aggression ... and to divert its attention away from the U.S.'s real objectives ... at the expense of [Arab] independence and sovereignty.

...

Thus the primary task of Arab strategy is to consolidate its unity and to bring together all its capabilities in the confrontation with the American-Zionist conspiracy in Lebanon and the whole Middle East.

Soviet media launched vicious ad hominem attacks on U.S. representatives Habib and Draper. Pravda, on November 4, reminded its readers "that shuttling American emissaries have brought calamity with them." Mr. Habib, Pravda said, first served as cover for the Israeli invasion which led ultimately to the massacre in the refugee camps. An earlier Pravda piece (November 1) charged that Mr. Habib was "essentially a channel for imposing U.S.-Israeli demands on the Arabs."

Another major theme in Soviet commentary on Lebanon was that the expanded role of the U.S. Marines is evidence that the U.S. plans to turn Lebanon into a bridgehead for the Rapid Deployment Force (Radio Peace and Progress Arabic, November 3).

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Afghanistan

The main themes of Soviet propaganda on Afghanistan were:

- o The Afghan government is firmly in control and gaining support daily.
- o Opposition to the government is from counterrevolutionaries, bandits, and mercenaries.
- o The counterrevolutionaries are being trained and armed in Pakistan by the U.S. "secret services."
- o Charges that Soviet forces were using chemical weapons are slanderous lies meant to distract attention from the use of such weapons [supplied by the U.S.] by counterrevolutionaries.

Soviet commentaries on Afghanistan in November and December complained about the discussion in the United Nations General Assembly on the "Afghanistan question." Calling the discussion a "violation of basic norms of international law and the UN Charter," November 26 Pravda charged that:

This deliberately harmful and sterile debate was inspired by circles that would like to preserve tension in Southwest Asia for their own imperialist and hegemonist aims.

The Soviets also attacked with vigor the November 24 State Department paper which charged that Soviet forces had been using chemical weapons. Asserting that such claims had never been proven, even by the group of UN authorities which had visited Afghanistan earlier in 1982, Radio Moscow's World English Service on November 30 said that it was the U.S., not the Soviet Union, that was supplying the chemical weapons. The TASS English wire on November 30 called such charges a "brazen lie," designed to form a propaganda screen behind which the Reagan Administration was "pressing its own large-scale program of preparations for chemical warfare."

Perhaps the most serious development in Soviet propaganda on Afghanistan during November and December was the story in Izvestiia on December 28 which accused the U.S. Embassy in Kabul of "directing the hand of murderers, agent saboteurs, and brutal bandits." The paper claimed that these activities "have aroused just wrath and indignation among the Afghan public." Specifically, the article charged that two Embassy officials had recruited a group of "counterrevolutionaries" and instructed them to blow up several buildings in the center of Kabul.

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Poland

Soviet treatment of the situation in Poland stressed the same themes as in the past:

- o The situation is gradually normalizing despite opposition from counterrevolutionary elements and attempts by Western governments, mainly the U.S., to interfere in Polish affairs.
- o The Polish government is strong and capable of dealing with any situation that might arise.
- o The Party is regaining its authority and the support of the people.

Other Countries/RegionsMiddle East

A long Pravda article on November 5 declared that events of recent months demonstrated the "neocolonialist essence" of U.S. policy toward the Arab world. According to the article, the U.S. is seeking revenge for the setbacks of the 1950's and 60's caused by "national liberation movements which relied on Soviet aid." Washington is trying to roll back national liberation and make the Middle East an area of confrontation with the Soviet Union. The favorite strategy of the U.S. is to split Arab countries and to kindle inter-Arab conflict. The U.S. poses as peace-maker, but really supports Israel. The Soviet position on the Middle East is in sharp contrast to the U.S., and allegedly has no selfish motivations and no aim but to transform the region into a zone of peace.

Radio Moscow Persian broadcasts to Iran stressed the threat that American imperialism still poses. The broadcasts painted the Soviet Union as the friend of Iran which did all it could to help the revolution (Radio Moscow Persian service, November 5). A November 10 broadcast warned that President Reagan's report to Congress on U.S.-Iranian relations showed that Washington intends "to implement a policy of diktats on Iran in the near future as it did under the Shah."

The Iran-Iraq war was described as being "only to the benefit of the imperialists" (Radio Moscow Persian service, November 4).

Frequent articles and broadcasts attacked the new U.S. joint military command which will exercise control over the Rapid Deployment Force in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf. The RDF was declared a threat to the Arab countries

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and described as having been set up especially to suppress the Arab countries and other national liberation forces, as well as to seize the oil fields (Radio Moscow Arabic service, December 22). This broadcast also implied that the RDF will use nuclear weapons, which will be "a grave threat to the countries from which the American [missiles] will be fired."

Sovetskaia Rossiia (November 12) charged that Israel and the U.S. had signed a secret supplement to the memorandum on strategic cooperation which allows the U.S. to deploy Pershing-2's and cruise missiles with nuclear warheads on Israeli territory. The article alleged that neutron weapons might also be based in Israel.

Asia

U.S. Defense Secretary Weinberger's trip to Southeast Asia was described as an attempt to draw ASEAN into the "orbit of U.S. interests," to draw the countries into the arms race, to turn ASEAN into a closed military group, and to set them against the socialist countries of Indochina.

The deployment of U.S. F-16's to Misawa airbase in Japan was characterized as a dangerous step likely to menace peace and as an example of the U.S. applying pressure to draw Japan into its own aggressive strategy. Soviet commentaries in Japanese stressed that the F-16 is a nuclear-capable aircraft and there is no guarantee that they will not be so equipped in the future. The Soviets threatened to take countermeasures to the threat. The Soviets also attacked what they called attempts to make Japan "the gendarme of the sealanes" by giving it responsibility for patrolling up to 1,000 miles from its shores. Radio broadcasts to Asia suggested that militarism was reviving in Japan and recalled Japanese acts during World War II in the region.

Latin America

President Reagan's trip to Brazil, Colombia, and Costa Rica was the main focus of commentaries on this region during November and December. The trip was called an attempt to mend Washington's relations with Latin America which were damaged by support for Britain in the Falklands/Malvinas war with Argentina (Radio Peace and Progress Spanish service, November 3). The trip was also characterized as an attempt to draw Brazil closer to the U.S. because, in the words of a Radio Moscow Spanish service broadcast to Latin America (November 9), "the U.S. is determined to use Brazil's military and political influence to the advantage of Yankee imperialism." The trip was later described as a "fiasco" which showed "clumsiness proper for a beginner" (Radio Moscow Spanish service, December 2).

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Raids from Honduras on Nicaragua by unmarked planes were described by Pravda (November 5) as part of the undeclared war being waged by "American imperialism and its accomplice, the Honduran military regime." According to the article, the CIA and the Pentagon are "trying to use counterrevolutionary rabble and mercenaries to stifle revolution" and American "interventionists" could join the attack at any moment.

The regional security and defense system set up by several Caribbean island nations was called an attempt by the U.S. to set up a military bloc whose real task would be to stifle the growing national liberation movement in the region and to pressure Grenada, which was not admitted to the organization (Pravda, November 4).

Soviet commentators charged that the coup attempt in Suriname was organized by "a small group of the economic elite and oligarchy closely connected with U.S. imperialism and Holland" (TASS English service, December 13).

Africa

Vice President Bush's visit to several African countries was the subject of heavy coverage in late November and early December. The trip's primary aim was said to be to solve the Namibian crisis, i.e., "to foist the U.S.-South African point of view," of "equating the long illegal occupation of Namibia by the South African racists and the presence of Cuban troops on Angolan soil, onto which they were invited by Angola's legitimate government to defend the country's independence from the selfsame racists and their stooges..." (Pravda, November 26). The trip was of course described as a failure. Moscow television, on November 29, saw similarities between Lebanon and Namibia and warned that the U.S. wants to transform the latter into another Lebanon.

The failure of the Organization of African Unity summit was laid at the feet of the U.S. by Radio Moscow's Arabic service (November 28). U.S. UN Ambassador Kirkpatrick was allegedly sent out last year to organize the boycott of the meeting and Vice President Bush was sent on a similar mission in 1982.

U.S.-Somali joint military exercises were described as being aimed at "ascertaining the capability of the Rapid Deployment Force whose task it is to intervene where U.S. interests are threatened" by Radio Moscow's Somali service on December 8. The broadcast went on to describe the government of President Barre as being under the "heel of the Pentagon." Somalia's neighbors were said by the broadcast to be worried by the exercise.

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The South African raid into Lesotho was compared to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in a Radio Moscow World English service broadcast (December 10): "The planes that bombed Maputo were of American make, just like aircraft that continue to sow death in Lebanon and El Salvador."

Western Europe

Principal Soviet media themes on Western Europe, apart from those concerning arms control and disarmament, stressed the economic and military threat posed by the U.S. to the region. The military threat comes from basing U.S. weapons and supplies in such countries as Norway or the siting of military headquarters in West Germany and Britain, which makes them prime targets for strikes should hostilities erupt. The economic threat comes from U.S. attempts to force West European governments to alter their internal and foreign trade policies to benefit America. Europeans are said to be strongly resisting U.S. pressure.

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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Listed below are representative Soviet press and TASS items on themes discussed in this report. Translations or summaries of these items appeared in the FBIS Daily Report (Soviet Union) during November and December.

ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

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